



MANCHESTER HEALTH DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT SUMMARY, MAY 2006

Community Epidemiology Program

PROGRAM LISTING:

**Arbovirus
Surveillance &
Control**

**Chronic Disease
Prevention**

**Communicable
Disease Control**

COMMUNITY EPIDEMIOLOGY

Dental Health

**Environmental
Planning and
Pollution Control**

Food Protection

HIV Prevention

**Homeless Health
Care Project**

Immunizations

**Institutional
Inspections**

**Lead Poisoning
Prevention**

**Public Health
Investigations**

**Public Health
Preparedness**

Refugee Health

School Health

**Sexually
Transmitted
Disease Control**

**Tuberculosis
Control**

Water Quality

**Youth Health
Promotion**

Summary of Program: Whether at a community, state, or federal level, decision makers and policy makers are increasingly being required to make decisions and implement actions based on the best evidence available. One of the core functions of a local health department is to regularly assess the public health needs of the constituency to anticipate and act upon those areas which are most amenable to prevention efforts. Community epidemiology is the branch of medical science that uses quantitative and qualitative methodologies to monitor health problems and their contributing factors and then applies this study to their control. The Manchester Health Department's Community Epidemiology and Disease Prevention Division works closely with local health professionals, community-based organizations and the general public to prioritize needs, establish effective solutions and evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions. This community process involves an advisory group comprised of major stakeholders in the outcomes, research on models that work, presentation of findings to the community, community input into the development of effective service models, and feedback on the success of implemented strategies through ongoing health assessment. Activities are linked closely to the *Healthy Manchester Leadership Council*, which analyzes and plans service-related needs of the community.

While the Department has always maintained a basic level of community health assessment services, the community epidemiology program was formally established as a separate unit in 1995. The Community Epidemiology and Disease Prevention Division employs one full-time City-funded community epidemiologist, and one full-time public health specialist and one full-time information technology support specialist with the support of outside public health preparedness funding. Together, this team works in collaboration with community partners, to address chronic disease prevention, health disparities, neighborhood revitalization, public health preparedness planning and workforce development.

Summary of Activities:

- Publication of Public Health Report Cards and reports on specific community issues or populations <http://www.manchesternh.gov/CityGov/HLT/healthdatareports.html>. This information is widely used by City Departments and community organizations for grant writing and resource allocation.
- Assessment and evaluation support for community-wide planning and implementation initiatives such as the Seniors Count Initiative funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Weed and Seed strategy funded by the U.S. Department of Justice
- Development of data reporting, surveillance, mapping and communication systems for early identification of disease trends and potential public health threats
- Targeted training in public health core competencies for staff through the NH Institute for Local Public Health Practice. Nearly 150 public health professionals have completed at least one of the five course offerings; 28 of whom are Manchester Health Department employees. This is professional development benefit for staff and has helped to reduce travel and conference expenses for training outside the City of Manchester.
- Ongoing support of the Healthy Manchester Leadership Council's priorities such as oral health improvement, lead poisoning prevention and the design of city wide solutions to improve access to health care

Current Program Notes and Trends:

The Community Epidemiology and Disease Prevention Division is currently working with the City's youth serving organizations to publish a community report on the health status of Manchester's children and families. The purpose of this report is to develop a core set of performance measurement indicators for monitoring local trends and priority issues facing this future generation and to provide recommendations for action on the community, policy and health care provider level.

The Division is also in the process of completing a report on aging in the City of Manchester. Program staff are working closely with specialists within the Environmental Health Division to map out needs and resources available to this often very frail and vulnerable population. Both reports are expected for release later this year.

Community Activities

Get Moving Manchester 2006 was held March 20th – April 14th. The program targeted 4,500 students in grades 3,4,5, and 6. The program teaches students about the importance of good nutrition, limiting screen time, and physical activity. Community sponsors included Elliot Hospital, Catholic Medical Center, Dartmouth Hitchcock Manchester, A-Market, Indian Head Athletics, Vital and Ryze Advertising, Manchester School District, and Hannaford Supermarkets. Sponsors provided \$7,000 in funding as well as in-kind donations to help support the program. Pre/Post test results will be analyzed to help document program outcomes.

Childhood Asthma Education Grant - The Manchester Health Department, together with the State Asthma Control Program, has obtained \$4,500 in funding through AHEC to contract with an asthma peer educator during SY06-07. The asthma educator will implement an educational school-based program, Open Airways for Schools, in all 14 elementary schools during next school year. The asthma educator will also develop a Tool Kit for Middle School Science teachers on Air Quality and Health. If successful, the toolkit will be utilized with teachers statewide.

Public Health Preparedness – Pandemic Flu Planning: The public health preparedness program (PHP) continues to work on several initiatives. Overall emergency planning with our City and regional partners continues on a regular basis and is focusing on influenza pandemic planning. This past month, we were notified that the Manchester area would be receiving in excess of \$78,000 to assist in pandemic flu planning. The Public Health Preparedness Advisory Council in conjunction with our surrounding communities will serve as the planning body for our regional area. In addition, a sub-group has been meeting regularly to plan a full-scale citywide exercise that will be held on August 5, 2006.

Breast Cancer Grant Received - The Manchester Health Department and the NH Minority Health Coalition have been awarded full funding (\$10,000) for the grant application submitted to the American Cancer Society's Community Grants for Breast Cancer Initiatives. The intervention strategy will focus on educating uninsured or underinsured women with limited English-proficiency to learn more about breast cancer and preventive screening. It is the goal of the intervention to assist program participants in complying with mammography screening guidelines to efficiently and equitably navigate the healthcare system by providing services targeted at commonly encountered barriers to accessing care, such as lack of transportation and lack of interpretation services.

Disease Notes

For the month of April, 18 reportable communicable diseases were investigated (excluding TB, STDs/ HIV, and other outbreak investigations). They were Varicella (7), Vancomycin resistant enterococci (VRE) (4), Hepatitis B (2) and the rest were Malaria, Strep pneumoniae, H. Influenzae.

The Department also was involved in the investigation of two outbreaks; one involving a local home for seniors where 29 residents became ill with nausea, vomiting and diarrhea; and the other being a norovirus outbreak that was originally thought to be associated with a Manchester restaurant.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website at <http://www.manchesternh.gov/CityGov/HLT/Home.html>, or call 624-6466